

Evander P. Walker Store  
Main Street  
Alexandria  
Huntingdon County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5410

HABS  
PA,  
31-ALEX,  
29-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

EVANDER P. WALKER STORE

HABS No. PA-5410

HABS  
PA,  
31-ALEX,  
29-

Location: The Walker Store is located on the north side of Main Street, five lots north of Hartslog Street, Alexandria, Porter Township, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Robert Foster.

Present Use: Video arcade and apartments.

Significance: This is the only gable-front, three-bay commercial building in Alexandria that dates from the mid-nineteenth century, although it was constructed after the canal-boom period and north of Hartlog Street. It is also one of the few buildings that retains its commercial character, despite having been partially converted into a dwelling. It remained in the Walker family for 100 years.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1855-75. According to a period map of Alexandria (Harshbarger, 39), Henry C. Walker owned this lot in 1855. In 1860 he sold the property with only a dwelling on it for \$700. The lot was sold again in 1862, for \$800, to Evander P. Walker, who was a merchant in Alexandria at that time. He also owned a store in 1875 and 1900; it is likely he erected the store after acquiring the lot, although the specific year has not been determined.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Lot No. 17, on which the store now stands, originally fronted 60 feet on the north side of Main Street and extended back 200 feet to Canal Street. However, the property now fronts 20' on the north side of Main Street and extends back 59' from the curb line.

The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Recorder of Deeds Office of the County of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

1860 Deed August 28, 1860, recorded in Volume P2, Page 390.

Henry C. Walker  
TO  
Samuel Isenberg.

1862 Deed September 12, 1862, recorded in Volume Q2, Page 354.

Samuel Isenberg  
TO  
Evander P. Walker.

1868 Deed March 20, 1872, recorded in Volume B3, Page 356.

(Originally deeded September 16, 1868, but document was burned.)

Evander P. Walker

TO

Susan Walker.

1885 Deed September 10, 1885, recorded in Volume U3, Page 179.

Charles E. Ault et al. (heirs of Susan Walker)

TO

Evander P. Walker.

1935 Deed July 13, 1935, recorded in Volume N7, Page 538.

Mary Claire Hughes et al. (granddaughter of E.P. Walker, daughter of Fred Walker)

TO

Sue Y. Walker and Mary Walker.

1962 Deed December 27, 1962, recorded in Volume 55, Page 88.

Mary and Sue Y. Walker (Paul Swigart, executor)

TO

Frederick Cullinan.

1982 Deed November 14, 1981, recorded in Volume 164, Page 706.

Frederick Cullinan

TO

Robert P. Foster.

3. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located. The vernacular structure was originally a front-facing gable, three-bay brick store.

4. Alterations and additions: All windows have been replaced with modern sash. A metal shed has been added to the rear facade. Today there is evidence of a brick accretion resembling a buttress, about 5' tall at the north end of the east wall; this does not appear in historic photographs.

B. Historical Context: The Walker store first appears on period maps in 1855, when it was one of the few commercial buildings on Main Street north of Hartslog Street and away from the concentrated eastern end of town. From 1850-60 Henry C. Walker was a merchant in Alexandria. He also served as school board secretary in 1850 at age 35 (Africa, 430).

Evander P. Walker, probably Henry's son, acquired the store in 1862 and is identified as a dry-goods merchant in 1862-63 and 1880 censuses. He was a member of the Odd Fellows, for which he served as treasurer in 1881. Walker was a Burgess in Alexandria from 1875-76 and 1880-81.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This two-story, three-bay, brick storefront represents the lone extant example of mercantile vernacular architecture in Alexandria.
2. Condition of the fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 20' x 55'.
2. Foundation: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Brick laid in seven-course American bond on all facades, indicative of its utilitarian function. Ornamentation is confined to mouse-tooth and dentil coursing at the cornice.
4. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing brick.
5. Porches: The front door is accessed by three steps. A one-story wood porch on the rear facade dually serves as a balcony accessed through the second-floor door.
6. Chimneys: An exterior cinder-block chimney is located on the northeast corner of the north facade.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The wood front door features two bottom panels and three-light glazing on the top portion.
  - b. Windows: The original two-over-two-light double-hung sash flanking the door have been replaced with one-over-one-light double-hung sash; one set of paneled shutters on the west window are extant. On the second floor, six-over-six-light double-hung sash have been replaced with one-over-one-light and fixed sash. The modern window casings have been set within the original openings surrounded by brick infill.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Front-facing gable with asbestos shingles.
  - b. Cornice: Decorative brickwork--mouse-tooth and dentil coursing--is located under the eaves of the east and west (side) facades. The corners

feature brick corbeling.

- D. Site: The Evander P. Walker Store is located in the what historically has been a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood on Main Street. Across the street is a bank and a funeral home; behind it is a fire hall. To the east is a small open lot; on the west is the residence that historically has been associated with the store in deed transactions.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Old views (found in Hartslog Heritage, 57 and 95).

- B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Porter Township tax records, 1819 to 1859, Huntingdon County Historical Society.

Alexandria Borough tax records, 1859 to 1873, Huntingdon County Historical Society and Huntingdon County Courthouse.

Huntingdon County Deed Books and Probate Records, Huntingdon County Courthouse, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

Huntingdon County Tax Map -- Alexandria.

Huntingdon County Historical Society survey sheets.

- C. Secondary and published sources:

Africa, J. Simpson. History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883.

Harshbarger, Jean P., Nancy R. Taylor, Sara H. Zabriskie, and F.R. Zabriskie. Hartslog Heritage. State College, Pennsylvania: K-B Offset Printing, Inc., 1975.

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Karen Genskow, Sangamon State University. Large-format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Alexandria, an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Saltsburg (Indiana County) and an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).